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Stars & Bars

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by Mike Caito

Stars & Bars

Thanks to **Medicine Ball**, **Six-Finger Satellite** and especially **Backwash** for not making a liar out of me last week. Three great sets. And even a decent crowd. Could this be a renaissance? Stay posted.

I never got **Big Dipper**, probably 'cause I'm so used to hunting barkeeps while they open for someone else. Which I think they should stick to, after catching Friday's gig. Give me **Frieda** or give me death. And **Camera Ready** are back, sounding pretty different but tight with an altered lineup at the Church House Saturday. Nice hat. The Animal Rights Benefit at the Last Call on Sunday was twisted. **Ron Bianco** and **Bilbo**, backed by (gulp!) **Sluggo** and **Gene** from **Boneyard**, did "Hound Dog." Much better than a **Cam Neely** two-hander in the chops. Three new **That'll Learn Ya** tunes sounded good too, but my night was made. **Learn Ya** plays **Ocean Mist** tonight (5/24), **El 'n' Gee** Friday.

Don't miss Friday night at AS220, with **Jon Campbell** as your multi-talented host. Buy his tape (*Ferrying to the Isle of Block*) and you won't be disappointed. And catch **Cousin Doppler**, too. Upright bass for all my frennnnnn-za.

Miss Xanna Don't headlines **Rocket** Saturday with her new backup band, **the Willin'**. Her nomination for Best Local Female Vocalist at the Boston Music Awards wasn't a fluke: she can belt. And her new bassist is from Providence! And she wears funky outfits! Just go.

Music Poll winners next week. Stop whining, already. If you didn't vote, you can't beef. Reagan Syndrome. Now I know how the WBRU folks feel after the Rock Hunt. The winners told their friends to vote, they did, they won. Everyone could've and should've done that. But wait till next year. And by the way, the results were, overall, pretty good, though most winners I've interviewed have seemed kinda leery. Thanks to all who took time to vote, no thanks (again) to those who stuffed and Marci, you pour a helluva draft, kid. □